

Message Text

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14/40

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2755

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR CLASSIFICATION (CONFIDENTIAL VICE
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TAGS: PFOR, GR, TU, MASS

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION TO HOUSE COMMITTEE ACTION ON MILITARY ASSIST

-

ANCE BILL

1. THE STRONGLY NEGATIVE TONE OF THE MEDIA'S COVERAGE
YESTERDAY (FEBRUARY 19) OF THE VOTE OF THE HOUSE INTER-
NATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE WAS
REVERSED IN PART TODAY, LARGELY DUE TO THE
GOG'S EFFORTS TO EDUCATE THE MEDIA ABOUT WHAT THE COMMITTEE'S
ACTION REALLY MEANT. THE GOG TOOK THE INITIATIVE TO
ASCERTAIN THE FACTS FROM THE EMBASSY AND THEN BRIEFED MEDIA
REPRESENTATIVES. ONE CONSEQUENCE WAS THAT COVERAGE TODAY
TENDED TO EMPHASIZE THE LARGER PORTION OF AID GOING TO GREECE.

2. YESTERDAY, THE PRESS SCORNFULLY HIGHLIGHTED THE
ASSISTANCE TO BE GIVEN TO TURKEY AND, EXCEPT FOR A FEW
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MINOR REFERENCES TO THE 50 MILLION DOLLAR GRANT AID TO GREECE,

IGNORED THE ASSISTANCE PACKAGE FOR GREECE. KATHIMERINI FRONT-PAGED "MILITARY AID APPROVED FOR TURKEY BY THE COMMITTEE" WITHOUT MENTIONING WHAT GREECE WOULD RECEIVE. TO VIMA HEADLINED A REPORT FROM WASHINGTON ENTITLED "175 MILLION DOLLARS U.S. AID FOR TURKEY", STATING THAT THE TURKS WERE GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS IN THE INTERCOMMUNAL TALKS TO ENCOURAGE A FAVORABLE OUTCOME OF THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE VOTE IN THE CONGRESS. IT LIKEWISE, IGNORED THE GREEK PACKAGE. AKROPOLIS HEADED ITS ARTICLE "U.S. MILITARY AID TO TURKEY", SAYING THAT THE CONGRESSIONAL ACTION IS THE FIRST SIGNIFICANT STEP IN REINSTITUTING FREE GRANT AID TO TURKEY. THE U.S. WAS ACCEDING TO TURKEY'S SUCCESSFUL BLACKMAIL. VRADYNI REPORTED "WITH PRESSURE OF FORD-KISSINGER, BIG AID TO TURKEY FROM WASHINGTON FOR PURCHASE OF WAR MATERIEL". IT EMPHASIZED THE INTERCOMMUNAL TALKS AS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE AID FOR TURKEY. ATHINAIKI AND ELEFOTHEROTYPIA, LIKEWISE, PLAYED UP THE ASSISTANCE TO TURKEY ASPECT. THESE TWO PAPERS ALONE, AND THEN ONLY AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT, NOTED THAT GREECE WOULD ALSO RECEIVE \$50 MILLION IN GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE. WHILE RIZOSPASTIS CHOSE NOT TO PRINT ANY STORY, AVGHI CARRIED A MINOR ARTICLE TYING THE AID TO TURKEY TO THE U.S. BASES THERE.

3. YESTERDAY, AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THIS SLANTED COVERAGE, A HIGHLY PLACED OFFICIAL IN THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER CALLED THE AMBASSADOR TO EXPRESS CONCERN AT THE MANNER IN WHICH THE STORY WAS BEING TREATED BY THE MEDIA. HE STATED THE NEED TO PUT THE CONGRESSIONAL VOTE IN PERSPECTIVE. WORKING TOGETHER TO GET THE FULL DETAILS KNOWN, THE EMBASSY PROVIDED SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON THE COMMITTEE VOTE SO THAT THE OFFICIAL COULD TAKE APPROPRIATE STEPS WITH THE MEDIA. THE GOVERNMENT SUBSEQUENTLY APPRAISED MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FACTS OF THE CONGRESSIONAL ACTION. IN THIS CASE THE GOG'S INITIATIVE PAID DIVIDENDS, FOR COVERAGE TODAY HAS IN GOOD PART BEEN A TURNABOUT, WITH CONSIDERABLE EMPHASIS HERE ON THE \$250

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MILLION PACKAGE PROPOSED FOR GREECE.

4. KATHIMERINI LED ITS FRONT PAGE WITH "250 MILLION DOLLARS OF AID GRANTED TO GREECE AND \$175 TO TURKEY - OBLIGATIONS AND TERMS ARE ONLY FOR ANKARA". THE ARTICLE CAREFULLY POINTS OUT THAT THE TERMS FOR TURKEY ARE TIED TO PROGRESS ON THE CYPRUS MATTER. AKROPOLIS HEADED ITS STORY "AMERICA

GIVES 250 MILLION DOLLARS WITHOUT ANY CONDITIONS - BIGGER AID TO GREECE THAN TO TURKEY - CERTAIN OBLIGATIONS ARE PLACED ON ANKARA". ETHNIKOS KYRIS, WHICH YESTERDAY TOTALLY IGNORED THE ISSUE, TODAY CONTAINED A LONG STORY ENTITLED "DECISION OF CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE: 250 MILLION FOR GREECE AND 175 TO TURKEY". THE PAPER ALSO EDITORIALIZED THAT WASHINGTON WAS AGAIN BECOMING COOL TOWARDS TURKEY, AND THAT THE AMERICANS IN TIME WILL WISE UP TO THE WAYS OF THE TRICKY TURKS. IT CONCLUDED THAT THE U.S. SHOULD SEE TO IT THAT THE TURKS USE THE MONEY FOR THE WELFARE OF THEIR PEOPLE AND NOT FOR AGGRESSIVE ARMAMENTS. TO VIMA CONFIRMED, HOWEVER, ITS CRITICAL APPROACH SAYING "KISSINGER WILL NOT BE AROUND NEXT YEAR - A WARNING TO THE TURKS". IT DID, NEVERTHELESS, GRUDGINGLY NOTE THE DIFFERENCE IN FAVOR OF GREECE OF THE MILITARY AID BILL. MANY OF THE AFTERNOON EDITIONS JOINED WITH THE MORNING PAPERS IN EMPHASIZING THE DIFFERENCES IN THE AMOUNTS OF ASSISTANCE GRANTED TO GREECE COMPARED WITH THE SMALLER AMOUNT TO BE GIVEN TO TURKEY. VRADYNI WROTE "250 MILLION DOLLARS IS THE U.S. AID TO GREECE AGAINST THE \$175 APPROVED FOR TURKEY". THE STORY POINTS OUT HOW GREECE RECEIVES THE "LION'S SHARE" AND NOTES THAT THE PRO-GREEK REPRESENTATIVES WERE REACTING TO THE PRO-TURKISH INTENTIONS OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. ATHINAIKI GAVE BANNER HEADLINES: "250 MILLION DOLLARS IS GIVEN TO US BY THE USA - 175 IS GRANTED TO TURKEY", ALTHOUGH ITS REPORTING NOTED THE GREEK GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO MITIGATE THE EFFECT OF U.S. AID TO TURKEY, THE PAPER ALSO VOICED THE OPINION THAT THE CONDITIONAL TERMS THAT THE TURKS NOT INCREASE TROOPS OR IMMIGRANTS ON CYPRUS IS ONLY A TURK-U.S. CONFIDENTIAL

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PLOT FOR IT IMPLIES RECOGNITION OF THE EXISTING NUMBERS OF TURKISH TROOPS AND IMMIGRANTS ON THE ISLAND. TA NEA AND ELEFTHEROTYPIA IGNORE THE ENTIRE MATTER. KUBISCH

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